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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA, CLIMATE, MIDEAST, FAO-SUMMIT,
EU;BERLIN

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[1.](#) Lead Stories Summary

Primetime TV newscasts Heute and Tagesschau opened with the beginning of the meeting at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome.

Newspapers led with diverse stories, including President Obama's visit to China, GM, climate protection, and student protests. Editorials focused on many different issues.

[2.](#) (U.S.-China) Obama Visit

All media (11/17) carried prominent reports on President Obama's visit to China, highlighting that he emphasized the significance of human

rights and the advantages of an uncensored Internet during a town hall with students in Shanghai. Frankfurter Allgemeine led with the headline: "Obama urges China to be more open and generous," and Sddeutsche headlined its lead story: "Obama flatters China-U.S. President praises Beijing as an equal partner and avoids direct criticism of human rights violations." Media also report that the President assured his audience that America would not try to contain China's rise. "We welcome China as a strong, prosperous and successful member of the community of nations," Frankfurter Allgemeine

quotes Obama as saying.

ZDF-TV's Heute (11/16) newscast reported this morning: "During his visit to China, U.S. President Obama met with President Hu Jintao for a second time to discuss economic relations. "Both countries must appropriately resolve their trade tensions," Hu Jintao commented after the meeting. The talks also focused on political topics. In a speech to students, Obama called on China to respect human rights. ZDF-TV's correspondent in China Johannes said: "Barack Obama went down very well with young people. Many even said 'we would like him to be our president.' This was too much for censors and those statements were deleted right away. Barack Obama made a good impression particularly on young people."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/17) editorialized on its front-page: "Little Strokes Fell Great Oaks. For years, U.S. Presidents have been talking about human rights when they visited China. Sometimes, they are even allowed to do this in public. Nobody knows whether this is understood. China has seen massive changes, but the state leadership

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remains stubborn on individual freedoms. It is therefore strange that Americans were disappointed that President Obama's statements in Shanghai were not broadcast throughout China. Why should Beijing risk this? The leadership would have shown true greatness and strength.... But this is not how China works. Criticism has been falling on deaf ears in the Chinese government for a long time. The weak giant suddenly is very strong, knowing that the world needs its economic and political participation."

Sddeutsche (11/17) opined: "The truth is that there is no alternative to finding a compromise with the surly regime in Beijing. Obama's predecessor quickly learned that confrontation does not get you anywhere. There is little hope that Obama's soft ball game will achieve what so many before him have not achieved: luring China's leadership to accept more freedoms for its people. However, it's worth a try."

Frankfurter Allgemeine's (11/17) front page editorial noted: "China benefits from the exchange rate to the dollar, and it does not even think about giving up this advantage by a gesture of solidarity towards trade partners.... China has been talking about a harmonized world for some time. We hear the words, we just cannot believe them. Towards Barack Obama, who is most credible when it comes to goodwill, Beijing is currently demonstrating that harmony means that the outer world should not make demands on China. Whenever China is constructive (as in the case of North Korea), it is because of its own rationale, not because somebody abroad would like to see it. This would not be too bad, however, we do not have any guarantee that China is willing to be constructive, e.g. in climate policy issues."

Die Welt (11/17) remarked in an editorial: "Barack Obama is seeing the beginning of the transpacific age, which will succeed the transatlantic age that has dominated world politics for 60 years. There will be no way around China anymore, although the country still has enormous shortcomings concerning its civil society and has not yet come to terms with itself. Only because of its economic power and its appetite for energy, China cannot be ignored. Beijing's state capitalism with the undervaluation of the Yuan results in excellent export returns. This makes China the biggest creditor of the U.S. and inevitably produces unpleasant dependencies."

13. (Climate) Copenhagen Conference

All papers (11/17) reported that Chancellor Merkel will travel to Copenhagen to attend the climate summit. Sueddeutsche headlined: "Merkel To Travel to Climate Summit - Chancellor Wants to 'Get the Maximum out of Summit Meeting' in Copenhagen." In a lengthy report

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the paper wrote under the headline: "Merkel Dissatisfied with Climate Talks," that "Chancellor Merkel criticized the preparations for the Copenhagen global climate summit. Deputy government spokesman Christoph Steegmans said that the results that have been known so far 'have not caused great euphoria.' He added that this is a reason why Chancellor Merkel would travel to the UN climate summit in Copenhagen. Thus far, Merkel only said that she would travel to Copenhagen, if the results were 'promising.' Steegmans added that Merkel's decision stressed her will to 'make Copenhagen a success' and to 'to get the maximum out of it.'"

Tagesspiegel carried a lengthy report headlined: "EU Insists on Ambitious Climate Protection Goals," and wrote: "The EU appealed to the United States and the big threshold countries to approve ambitious climate protection goals at the global climate conference in Copenhagen. The EU said that, even though it would no longer be possible to adopt a legally binding climate protection agreement, a negotiating framework should be finalized with clear targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the financing of climate protection in developing nations."

ARD-TV's late evening newscast Tagesthemen (11/16) broadcast the following commentary: "There are also different approaches than the current one for the Copenhagen conference. For the rescue of banks and states, for economic stimulus programs, governments quickly established close links. They demonstrated solidarity at the international level and offered billions of euros for rescue programs. Prosperity should not melt away. And what about glaciers? We are damned to pursue a sustainable development. But the others should go first, but where? To Noah's Ark?"

Norddeutscher Rundfunk radio of Hamburg (11/16) aired the following commentary: "How can the Copenhagen summit turn into a success? With

such an approach it can no longer become a success. This is a disappointing end of a promising climate year. The omens at the beginning of the year have never been as promising. As climate chancellor, Angela Merkel paved the way for the EU, and President Obama, when entering office, promised the world a U.S. climate change [policy], but the U.S. president has failed. His slimmed down climate bill is likely to be adopted only next year. Compared to President

Bush, only the rhetoric has changed. And what about the EU? The EU, too, has given up its ambitions at the end of October.... Let us hope that the failed APEC summit will mobilize the last forces for real progress in Copenhagen."

Deutschlandfunk radio (11/16) commented: "Even though the chances
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for an agreement are bad right now, the climate summit should take place notwithstanding. Climate protection activists and environmental organizations will again exert massive pressure and there may still be a chance to move something. On the other hand, the conference will again demonstrate that time is of the essence. Declarations of intent are the last thing the people need right now. The time for nice speeches is over."

Under the headline: "Trip with a Symbolic Value," Sueddeutsche (11/17) argued: "Chancellor Merkel will travel to Copenhagen to contribute to achieving a result that can be interpreted as a success. But it is totally insignificant for the success of a climate conference whether this or that state leader will take part in it, even if it is the president of the most powerful nation on earth. It is uncertain whether Barack Obama will take part. It may be possible that he is shying away from a trip to the city where he had to accept his first defeat a few weeks ago when Chicago was not awarded with the 2016 Olympics."

Die Welt (11/17) editorialized: "The hesitant attitude of the Asian-Pacific economic forum and of President Obama towards binding targets for the reduction carbon dioxide emissions will not result in the world going down. This view is only an expression of the things that move the people beyond the close German horizon. Is it reasonable to jeopardize economic growth on the basis of computer models? This question is being discussed differently in the threshold countries than in Germany and growing doubts in the U.S. about these horror scenarios have added to this [skepticism]. There are different problems in the world: The number of starving people has been on the rise and in Rome the FAO is discussing these problems right now. Unfortunately, global summits tempt us to show off with a well-sounding policy of symbols. Diplomats cannot perform miracles, the least when we constantly demand such things from them."

According to an editorial in Handelsblatt (11/17), "we owe it to the Danish government that it has gotten things straight three weeks before the beginning of the summit. The confession that, at the end

of the summit, there will only be a political declaration speaks of its sense of reality. Another result would be desirable, but is totally out of the question and would be wishful thinking. We can even take a positive position in view of the current developments: If the Copenhagen summit does not have to approve binding legal rules, the delegations have the opportunity to concentrate on what is essential instead of getting lost in small print."

Regional daily General-Anzeiger of Bonn (11/17) judged: "Maybe some
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of us still remember early 1995. At that time the global climate conference in Berlin under the wise orchestration of former Environment Minister Angela Merkel adopted a last-ditch compromise that resulted in the Kyoto Protocol two years later. At issue in Copenhagen will be approving a sound political framework that will be the basis for a concrete agreement. In this respect, Merkel can play a decisive role such as in 1995 - if she only wants it."

14. (Mideast) Peace Process, Palestinian State

Die Welt (11/17) editorialized: "The Palestinian chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, revived an old idea: given that no Palestinian state exists after 18 years of negotiations, one could one-sidedly pronounce a state without a peace agreement.... The truth is that Palestinians would only lose by such a move. They would not control a square meter more than the current 40 percent of the West Bank, which is already under its control. Even though every Israeli attack would then be a violation of Palestinian sovereignty-no western country would raise its hand when Israel arrests Hamas fighters beyond the border. The one-sided proclamation of sovereignty could in fact lead to in clear disadvantages. If they cancel to peace process, Israelis would no longer have to stick to any agreements either. The Oslo agreement, however, had paved the way for cooperation on a lower level. If this were stopped now, it would pose a danger to the survival of a Palestinian state. Given that Palestinians also know this, the plan of a unilateral state foundation remains an empty threat."

Sddeutsche (11/17) headlined "A dreamy solution," and commented: "The topic is very unpleasant for Washington, Berlin and co. because there are reasons that speak in favor of Erekat's plan. By founding its own state, the Palestinian would only take the international community at its word. They were promised this state. Already in 1993, the peace of Oslo formulated this goal and the two-state solution remains the foundation of today's peace efforts. U.S. President Obama as well as Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu have committed themselves to it.... Palestinians could also refer to a precedent: the case of Kosovo... Legally, the Palestinians have the same rights as the people in Kosovo. However, in real life the plan does not have a chance. They

know that ever since Yasser Arafat tried the strong man act with declaration of independence in 1988. Unlike the Albanians freed by NATO troops, the Palestinians would not be in the position to found a state of their own, and this is not just because Israeli soldiers

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still occupy a large part of their country. Their prime minister noted that working institutions must be created first. In addition, the state-to-be is divided into two enemy entities. Without an agreement between the Fatah in Ramallah and the Hamas in Gaza, Palestinians can't even apply to the UN for recognition."

15. (Environment) FAO Summit Meeting

In a commentary, Norddeutscher Rundfunk radio of Hamburg (11/16) judged: "the fight against hunger has obviously no high priority. The list of participants in the FAO summit in Rome is evidence of it. Apart from hosting Prime Minister Berlusconi, no state leader from the eight leading industrialized countries attended the meeting. Angela

Merkel, Gordon Brown, and Barack Obama have better things to do. Their representatives and ministers have taken over the task of selling the meager promises of the summit as a strategic success. The final declaration, which has already been adopted, hides this inactivity in an empty phrase: assistance for the least developed countries is to be increased 'substantially.' This means in plain English: more funds, but there are no timetables or binding promises. At the summit in Rome, the industrialized countries are again demonstrating that their own economic output is more important than

the suffering of millions of people in the world. One billion starving people - this figure has not yet resulted in a rethinking.

The community of nations continues to allow the developing nations to literally starve at outstretched arms."

Under the headline: "What Now?" Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/17) argued: "Can such a meeting, as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon demanded, really develop a 'global vision' to fight hunger? Or will there only be an appeal to the bad conscience of the wealthy countries? There

are many reasons why there is not enough food for all the people: climate changes impede agricultural production and subsidies in the

wealthy nations are responsible for the fact that not only an abundance of food is being produced but that it can also be exported

and push competitors in the poor countries out of the markets.

Robert Mugabe, however, reminds us of the fact that a rather rich country can also be ruined by a bad government."

die tageszeitung (11/17) judged in a front-page editorial under the

headline: "Empty Bellies, Empty Chairs," that "such summit meetings

are reasonable to learn more about international dependencies That is

why it is all the more disgraceful that those governments which

could contribute the most to a better agricultural policy are conspicuous by their own absence. All the Obamas, Husb, Merkels, Browns, and Sarkozys must give this issue top priority; otherwise, such a meeting will be a meeting of experts who enter into talks by

excluding the public. With respect to climate change, politicians have understood this. Hunger in the world, which is as great a challenge as climate change, deserves the same kind of attention."

16. (EU) Future President

Welt am Sonntag (11/15) carried an editorial under the headline: "Vaira Vike-Freiberga for President!" and opined: "Europe will get a president on Thursday but the problem is that there is still no European public. That is why there has been no election campaign for this most important job in the EU. Let's pretend there would have been an election campaign, let's pretend we citizens of the European Union would have a say. What about [former Latvian] Vaira Vike-Freiberga for president? There is no doubt about the qualifications of this multi-culturally raised candidate who is patriotic, intellectually versed and, at the same time, knows every trick in the books. But why Vike-Freiberga and not Tony Blair, Jean-Claude Juncker or Hermann van Rompuy? She is a woman and in addition, a strong woman. She represents the new Europe of the former Eastern bloc countries, and she will represent the interests of the smaller EU countries. She has no illusions about Russia, would strengthen the transatlantic partnership and is in a certain sense the Angela Merkel of the European Union. The personality of the new EU president will be decisive of whether the new office will turn into a crystallization point of a new European awareness or become a mere secretariat. That is why Europe needs a strong personality at the top. Vaira Vike-Freiberga for President!"

MURPHY